



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 23 February 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
23 FEBRUARY 1967

1. South Vietnam

Generals Thieu and Ky will try to reach private agreement on which is to throw his hat in the presidential ring. Failing this, they will leave it up to their fellow officers to choose between them; in any event, the military will put up only one candidate.

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Thieu meanwhile is hedging his bets. While quietly lining up civilian support for his presidential ambitions, he is also trying to have written into the new constitution an "armed forces council" with clearly spelled-out powers.

Thus if Ky gets the nod, Thieu could still keep his hand in through leadership of the military.

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2. East Europe

3. West Germany

Yesterday Kiesinger asked in Ambassador McGhee to assure him that there was no truth to press reports that his government was dissatisfied with the ambassador or with its relations with the US in general. The Chancellor also said that he was trying to tone down his country's emotional reaction to the nonproliferation treaty, but added that many eminent Germans had "sincere and objective" fears about the present draft.

4. Soviet Union

A Soviet diplomat in London says that Kosygin made clear to the British that Moscow is not now interested in negotiating an East-West agreement to reduce forces in Europe. He did this by saying that the question of Germany's frontiers must first be settled--a precondition he knows is unacceptable to the West.

The source says Kosygin was responding to pressures from within the USSR and from Hanoi against any step that might help the US transfer troops from Europe to Vietnam. Also, Moscow may believe the West will soon reduce its forces in Germany anyway, and hence can see no need to be forthcoming.

5. Communist China

Southeast China appears to be in the grip of a rapidly spreading epidemic of meningitis. The mass movement of the Red Guards and their interference with doctors and health facilities is probably a prime cause.

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6. Iraq

Syria's shutting down of the oil pipeline from Iraq to the Mediterranean continues to cost Iraq some \$500,000 a day. The mere mention of this madness to President Arif is said to be like "rubbing salt into his raw wound."

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This week Arif's mood is probably worse. Damascus has curtly rebuffed his proposal that government-owned Iraqi oil be allowed through the pipeline, insisting that he first nationalize his portion of the pipeline.

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7. India

The general elections--although returns are by no means complete--are shaping up as a traumatic experience for the once monolithic Congress Party.

The party will apparently retain control of the national government, but with a greatly reduced majority. Mrs. Gandhi won handily, but several prominent party leaders--including the Congress' president--have been defeated, along with some cabinet members. The party lost Kerala State by a landslide to a Communist-led front, and was crushingly defeated in one other state. Several more are still in the doubtful column.

The right-wing opposition parties will be the chief beneficiaries of all this, although for the time being they will not be able to go beyond making louder and more disagreeable noises.

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8. Indonesia

In a speech today Suharto gracefully accepted all the powers of government. Sukarno retains the now meaningless title of "President" but Suharto hinted that he may be deprived of that by congress next month..

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